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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1-18. Cancelled

19. (currently amended) A method for in vitro ~~fertilization~~ fertilisation comprising the step of: exposing and culturing one or more oocytes in metaphase II ("MII oocytes") with spermatozoa in a culture medium, ~~the culture medium comprising at least one MAS, a MAS analogue, or an additive or additives capable of stimulating endogenous stimulation of the accumulation of at least one MAS,~~ the exposure and culturing lasting until zygotes and/or pre-embryos are formed.

20. Cancelled

21. (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the MII oocytes are cumulus enclosed oocytes.

22. Cancelled

23. (currently amended) A method according to claim 19, wherein the MAS is selected from the group consisting of FF-MAS (4,4-dimethyl-5 α -cholesta-8,14,24-triene-3 β -ol), T-MAS (4,4-dimethyl-5 α -cholest-8,24-diene-3 β -ol), 1-methylzymosterol, and zymosterol, and or mixtures of any thereof.

24. (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein MAS is FF-MAS.

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25. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 19, wherein MAS is T-MAS.

26. Cancelled

27. (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the oocytes are nude.

28-41 Cancelled

42. (currently amended) The method according to claim 19, wherein the *in vitro* fertilization ~~fertilisation~~ is *in vitro* fertilization ~~fertilisation~~ of human oocytes.

43. (currently amended) A method for *in vitro* fertilization ~~fertilisation~~ comprising the steps of:

(a) one or more germinal vesicle ("GV") oocytes in a culture medium, the culture medium comprising at least one MAS, ~~a MAS analogue, or an additive or additives capable of endogenous stimulation of the accumulation of at least one MAS;~~ thereby ~~hereby~~ forming one or more oocytes; and

(b) exposing and the one or more ~~Mil~~ oocytes of step (a) with spermatozoa in a culture medium, the culture medium comprising at least one MAS, ~~a MAS analogue, or an additive or additives capable of endogenous stimulation of the accumulation of at least one MAS;~~ the exposure and lasting until zygotes and/or pre-embryos are formed.